



Travis County Fire Marshal's Office

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Be careful with fireworks this holiday season

Fireworks are legal for sale in Travis County tomorrow, December 20, through midnight on January 1, but the Fire Marshal's Office reminds residents that fireworks can cause severe injury and damaging fires. A red flag warning for tomorrow also brings high winds and added fire danger.

"Dry vegetation, high winds and low humidity increase our chances of experiencing wildfire, and fireworks could provide the spark that starts a fire," said Travis County Fire Marshal Hershel Lee. "We ask that you refrain from using fireworks due to these conditions. If you insist on using fireworks, please follow recommended safety precautions."

The Travis County Fire Marshals' office recommends following these safety tips:

- Do not consume alcohol and use fireworks because it's a dangerous combination.
- Do not use fireworks on high fire danger days, such as red flag days.
- To detonate fireworks, find a flat surface, away from buildings, dry leaves and grass.
- Have water on hand in case of a fire.
- Insist on adult supervision when buying or setting off fireworks.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Never give fireworks to small children; even sparklers can cause serious burns.

In 2010, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 8,600 people for fireworks related injuries. The risk of fireworks injury was highest for children ages 5-14. The NFPA also reports that in 2010 fireworks caused an estimated 15,500 reported fires that resulted in eight reported civilian deaths, 60 civilian injuries and \$36 million in property damage.

The sale and use of skyrockets with sticks and missiles with fins are prohibited in unincorporated parts of Travis County due to the extremely dry conditions and risk of wildfire. The sale and possession of fireworks are prohibited within the city limits of Austin. In addition, fireworks are not allowed in Travis County Parks and parks managed by Travis County.

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Submitted by: Travis County Emergency Services PIO Lisa Block, Tel: 512-854-7954